

9441.1993(23)

REGULATORY STATUS OF BATTERY CARCASSES

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Washington, D.C. 20460
Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response

November 10, 1993

Mr. Christopher L. Freed
Chemical Waste Management, Inc.
Manager - Environmental Regulations
3001 Butterfield Road
Oak Brook, Illinois 60521

Dear Mr. Freed:

Thank you for your letter of April 30, 1993 summarizing your meeting of April 29, 1993 with Richard Kinch of my staff. Upon further investigation of this issue since the receipt of your letter, however, it is clear that battery carcasses do not qualify as debris. They are considered to be containers, as explained below.

As discussed in detail in the preamble to the final rule establishing alternate treatment standards for hazardous debris, intact containers are not debris, and hence are not subject to the treatment standards for debris. 57 FR 37225 (August 18, 1992). In addition, in previous rulemakings EPA has stated that battery casings designed to hold free liquids for use other than storage are containers. I refer you specifically to 40 CFR 264.314(d)(3); 265.314(c)(3); and 55 FR 22637/2 (June 1, 1990). Thus, such intact battery casings are not debris.

In your letter, you state that EPA suggested, elsewhere in the preamble to the final debris rule, that batteries could be debris unless they are subject to a specific treatment standard. I believe you have based this statement on the discussion at 57 FR 37222 and footnote 10, which gives "lead acid or cadmium batteries" as an example of a debris subject to a specific treatment standard. Unfortunately, you then draw the inference that because mercury batteries are not mentioned in this footnote, they are therefore debris.

This is an incorrect conclusion. First, please note that the actual regulatory language does not contain the example of the lead acid battery. 57 FR at 37270. More important, as explained above, intact containers are never classified as debris. Consequently, the example in footnote 10 refers only to lead acid or cadmium batteries that are not intact. Such batteries would still not be subject to the treatment standards for debris because there is a more specific treatment standard for lead acid or cadmium batteries. The footnote does not, however, in any way vitiate the general principle that intact containers are not debris and that batteries are types of containers.

I hope this response, based on a thorough examination of the issue of concern, is helpful. If you need further information, please contact Richard Kinch, Chief of the Waste Treatment Branch in our Waste Management Division at (703) 308-8434.

Sincerely,
Bruce R. Weddle
Acting Director
Office of Solid Waste